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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: SCUL KPAO NZ

SUBJECT: PROPOSAL FOR DIGITAL VIDEO CONFERENCE WITH DEBORAH JOWITT, VILLAGE VOICE DANCE CRITIC, FEBRUARY 9

¶1. Post requests a digital video conference with Village Voice dance critic Deborah Jowitt in New York at 3:30 p.m. Thursday, February 9 (9:30 a.m. February 10, New Zealand time). The New Zealand audience would include journalists and dance critics in training at a conference conducted by "Creative New Zealand," the New Zealand government funding agency for the arts. The DVC audience would be in the American Embassy's auditorium in Wellington. (See more on Creative New Zealand at <http://www.creativenz.govt.nz.>)

¶2. Deborah Jowitt has been contacted in advance by Undine Marshfield and Ruth Delaney of Creative New Zealand, and she has agreed to participate at this date and time. Post requests IIP to make formal contact with Deborah Jowitt to arrange DVC studio booking and honorarium payment.

¶3. Justification: Following a successful DVC featuring New York Times dance critic Jennifer Dunning on March 1, 2005, Creative New Zealand again has approached Public Affairs for a follow up program specifically for journalists who write about dance in New Zealand. Public Affairs is pleased to see the momentum that the initial conference generated and the confidence this government agency has in participating with digital video conferencing via the American Embassy. The conference's goal is to continue to develop the standards of criticism by New Zealand dance journalists and writers. Post wishes to develop closer ties with New Zealand journalists. As there is a general bias against American foreign policy in the New Zealand media, it is important for Post to provide journalists with opportunities to write about American culture, while at the same time developing their professional standards.

¶4. New Zealand dance criticism in general is not of a high standard and (until the DVC on March 1, 2005) there has been no specific training in this area. By contrast, the standard of dance -- both contemporary and classical -- in New Zealand is rising to the extent that New Zealand choreographers, dancers and their works are being celebrated overseas. For example, the New Zealand contemporary dance company "Black Grace" was critically acclaimed at the (U.S.) Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival in 2004 and in New York in ¶2005. See: Jennifer Dunning's New York Times review on the Black Grace web site <http://www.blackgrace.co.nz/events.html.>

¶5. Audience: The audience for this digital video conference would include newspaper journalists, writers of dance history and contemporary dance critics; administrators, teachers and students of leading dance organizations such as the New Zealand School of Dance and DANZ (the dance teachers and producers network); and, members of the public who are interested in the arts, dance and journalism. Ambassador and Mrs. McCormick are scheduled to attend the DVC and to

welcome the participants. It is expected that a smaller invited audience also would be able to observe from the American Consulate in Auckland.

¶6. Topic and description of event: Deborah Jowitt is requested to present a 15- to 20-minute talk about dance criticism, generally discussing "what makes good dance criticism and writing" based on her experience and knowledge. After this, the discussion would be opened to questions from the audience. Alternatively, she may prefer to do a shorter talk and ask for questions from the audience sooner.

¶7. Deborah Jowitt's contact details are:

email: dj2@nyu.edu
Tel: (212) 475-3300
Village Voice Media, Inc., 36 Cooper Square, New York, NY 10003

¶8. Post contact:

Richard Benge, Cultural Specialist, Public Affairs, U.S.
Embassy Wellington.
Office phone: 64-4-462-6052
Fax: 64-4-499-0490
Email: benger@state.gov.

¶9. Funding: Post requests the New York DVC costs including call charge to be paid by IBUCKS.

A DVC with Deborah Jowitt and New Zealand dance journalists would be a timely and valuable development following the success of the DVC with Jennifer Dunning on March 1, 2005.

Thank you for considering this request and regards.

Pazdral